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THE PHYSICIAN'S ANSWER

Medical Authority and Prevailing Misconceptions about Sex

at Joseph 1871-
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The Physician's Answer

The sex motive runs like a golden thread through the warp and woof of human life. It is one of the greatest influences determining human character, happiness, and destiny. It has filled the pages of history with stirring deeds of valor; has created masterpieces of literature, music, and art; and it is the very soul of the drama.

The sex function is the most pervasive human function, touching life in its every aspect and interest. The noblest, purest, and finest in manhood and womanhood is intimately related to and dependent upon normal sex life. In the exercise of his sex function man bears his deepest responsibilities to society and joins the Creator in bringing into being human souls.

But that which is capable of the highest uses lends itself also to the lowest abuses. The sex instinct, when normally developed, wisely directed and controlled, becomes a source of power, of capacity for achievement, and of inspiration to the noblest of ideals. When misdirected, uncontrolled, and sensualized, it tends to physical decay, intellectual confusion, and spiritual ruin.

It is significant that the budding sex consciousness of the adolescent youth normally tends to express itself not in desire for sexual gratification but in romantic idealism and manly chivalry. It tends to express itself in ways that awaken in him the noblest impulses and the finest human qualities. His girl chum, whose presence up to that time has awakened in him responses not essen-

tially different from those aroused by the presence of a boy, upon whom he has looked with a sense of his own superiority or as a thing to be teased, now becomes to him a new being—one to be desired above all else in the world. She becomes the subject of his thoughts and dreams and the queen of his air castles; one to be loved, served, and defended against the world. His imagination becomes busy picturing situations in which he is the hero and which show to him what he would do to the fellow who would dare to harm her or to offer her an insult. Why is he so resentful of jibes about "the girls"? Because he instinctively feels that it is dealing in a coarse and irreverent manner with that which is pure and sacred.

Developing sexual love, coupled though it necessarily is with physical impulses, does not normally tend to express itself in desire for sexual gratification, but rather in those impulses, desires, and aspirations which are fundamental to the development of the finest type of manhood. The future character of the individual will approach such a type of manhood or one characterized by low ideals, selfishness and sensuality, largely according to whether he has allowed the precious opening buds of his sex life to blossom in their natural purity and mature into the normal fruits of pure noble manhood, or allowed it to be blighted by the frosts of passion, eaten with the worms of lust, and dwarfed into a base, misshapen thing.

In order that this powerful, all-pervasive instinct may perform its normal energizing and manhood-building function in the life and character of the individual, it is necessary that it be so directed and controlled as to conform to the laws of his *whole* being, physical, intel-

lectual, and spiritual. These laws of his being, as also every consideration of right and of human welfare, demand that the individual shall lead a chaste life—a life free from all forms of sexual indulgence, physical or mental, outside of marriage. If he breaks these laws, retribution in his mental and spiritual life if not in the physical, coarsening and deadening those finest qualities of manhood from which the deepest joys and the greatest worth of man must ever spring, is as sure as the response of the stars to the law of gravitation. There is no possibility of compromise here. There is but one normal sex life for the young man—normal in relation to his own highest interests and to his social responsibilities—and that is the life in which his sex problem is left wholly to the care of nature, in which his sex impulses are controlled and transmuted into finer stuff by resolute will and high ideals of life as a whole. It is the sexually continent life, continent in thought and imagination as well as in deed.

There is generally prevalent in the minds of young men the belief that a life of sexual continence is neither feasible nor possible. It is believed by many:

1. That a life of sexual continence is not consistent with the best physical health.

2. That the exercise of the sex function is necessary to the full development and preservation of “manly power”—the power of procreation.

3. That the sexual impulse in man is so imperious that it is impossible to control it and, therefore, a sexually continent life cannot be expected of man.

4. That, therefore, the moral standard which we apply to woman cannot be applied to man. We must recognize a double standard of morality.

These erroneous and pernicious beliefs have been propagated chiefly on the authority of advertising medical fakers, whose business depends on misrepresentation and deceit, men whose methods exclude them from the ranks of reputable physicians. They are also taught by those within the ranks of the profession who are ignorant or unscrupulous or both, and who for the most part have no higher incentive in their profession than the pursuit of the dollar. The teaching of these men is in most cases more an expression of their own vicious habits than of real conviction. Both wholly misrepresent the teaching and attitude of the great majority of physicians who constitute the reputable body of the profession. It may be fairly stated that it is the consensus of opinion of those in the medical profession whose reputation and character entitle them to a hearing, that there is no evidence that sexual continence is inconsistent with the highest degree of health and vitality; that, on the other hand, sexual relations—outside of marriage—are full of the gravest dangers not only to physical health, but to the whole life of the individual, to his future family, and to society.

In speaking on this question, Dr. William H. Howell, Professor of Physiology at Johns Hopkins University, says:

“So far as I have been able to run it down the argument used takes this general form. There is implanted in man a strong, indeed, almost an imperative sexual appetite. This appetite is normal, as normal as the desire for food, and in one case as in the other the presence, force, and universality of the instinct imply that nature means that it shall be exercised, and, therefore, its exercise or gratification is essential for the

preservation of the integrity of the organism. The premises of this argument are sound, but the conclusion is illogical and rests upon a misconception of the true significance of the sexual instinct, biologically considered. The analogy drawn between the sexual appetite and the appetite for food is illusory. Food is an actual physiological necessity for the maintenance and growth of the body; without food the body cannot exist. The living tissues require constantly a supply of material in the form of food to repair their wastes and to yield the necessary energy for their functional activity. If this supply is permanently withdrawn the body dies. This, of course, is an incontestable fact which no one will deny. The sense of hunger is, therefore, a necessary provision of nature to force the animal to seek its food; appetite for food and the gratification of that appetite by the act of eating are genuine physiological necessities for the preservation of the health or indeed for the mere existence of the organism. The sexual appetite has no such demonstrable relationship to the welfare of the individual. It is a provision established in nature not for the preservation of the individual organism, but for the preservation of the race. The sexual instinct and its exercise in reproduction constitute a necessity, an absolute necessity for the propagation of any given species, and therein lies the explanation of the existence and impelling force of the sexual appetite. For without a strong driving force of this kind it is manifest that bisexual animals would not produce and rear their progeny. . . .

“Whatever may be the truth in regard to it, the fact remains that there is no evidence whatsoever that the sexual appetite or the act of reproduction has any physio-

logical relationship to the preservation of the integrity of the individual. This appetite has been created or evolved and made strong in us for an entirely different purpose. A sexual necessity exists only so far as the integrity of the race is concerned; so far as the individual is concerned his sexual functions may be unused or he may be completely unsexed without any injury to his bodily health."

Dr. William T. Belfield of the Rush Medical College says: "That cohabitation is necessary to physical health, that continence and health are incompatible, is the comfortable creed of men addicted to promiscuous sexual intercourse: though such a man flies into a virtuous rage if an unmarried sister or daughter adopts his creed and conserves the health of her male friends by administering to sexual necessity. It is only the other fellow's sister whose philanthropic interest in masculine health should be encouraged."

There have been some sincere but short-sighted medical writers who have attributed certain nervous disturbances to sexual abstinence and who have been inclined to advocate a "natural morality" in which certain sexual restraints of civilization should be removed as over against a "civilized morality" uniformly demanding continence outside of marriage.

Dr. Foerster of the University of Zürich replying to these views says:* "We are quite prepared to admit that in the case of particular dispositions, or in the case of an inadequate strength and development of the spiritual counteracting factors, the repression of strong instincts and needs may lead to nervous disturbance. But dis-

*"Marriage and the Sex Problem." F. W. Foerster, Stokes Co., New York.

turbances of this kind are associated with every discrepancy between desire and fulfillment, and may manifest themselves in other spheres far more severely than in that of sex; yet at the same time the moral necessity of the repression is not removed. Moreover, even if the desires in question be scrupulously gratified, the nervous disturbance, in the case of such natures, is only temporarily set aside and not really eliminated; the difficulty can, therefore, best be met by a deeper psychological treatment of the problems of self-control and abnegation. . . . We must take into account *not only the possible immediate hygienic consequences, but also all those further consequences for health associated with the increase or diminution of man's spiritual control over his physical and psychical conditions.* It might very well be the case that as a result of sexual abstinence a man could bring about certain nervous crises, but in return for this acquire a firmness of character which would place him beyond the power of nerve-disturbing results of a much more serious nature. On the other hand, it might very well be that through a surrender to sexual impulse a man could momentarily avoid certain nervous troubles, at the same time lapsing into a weak-willed condition, which would put him at the mercy of all the hidden pathological tendencies to which he might be subject, and would above all else bring him into situations incomparably more injurious to his psychic health than any of the lesser difficulties, the avoidance of which had been the dominating principle of his sexual conduct. . . . Spiritual depression is often capable of undermining even man's physical health more seriously than any mere physiological or nervous disturbances. For example, is not the impulse towards self-respect, which is most

deeply attacked through sexual laxity and impulsiveness, at the same time an instinct whose repression can very injuriously affect the nervous system and even the circulation of the blood? . . . There are men who, on moral grounds, withhold themselves from all actual immorality, but at the same time dwell in their thoughts upon that which their conscience will not allow them to practice; there can be no manner of doubt that such a state of mind as this must have a highly injurious effect upon the nervous system. It would be quite another matter, however, to admit that weak-willed and inconsistent individuals of this sort would be restored to health by sexual 'freedom'; in many cases the whole situation would then merely sink a stage deeper, the man would live a 'normal life,' in the sexual sense, while his imagination went beyond that into the artificial or perverse, again giving rise to irritation and the existence of unfulfilled desires, as in the previous state of sexual abstinence. The cause of the nervous disturbance, therefore, in these cases does not lie in the abstinence as such, but either in an abnormal disposition or merely in a hypertrophy of the imagination due to defective education and self-education. Often both these factors are operative. For such persons abstinence is consequently relatively the healthiest, as long as they do not marry, because every moral resistance imparts some sort of inner firmness, whereas characterless surrender makes such people (in every other sphere too) into weak-willed slaves, and offers opportunity to every sort of morbid tendency. . . . The aim should be to liberate the active principle and give it expression on a higher plane: the only right pedagogical course is to represent every act of inhibition and repression as a means towards the liberation of

a stronger and more valuable spiritual life, and thereby place all self-limitation in an active relationship to a great view of life as a whole; in this way the impression of a restriction of life is removed, and the energy in question yoked to higher purposes.

“All solutions of the sex problem which tend to emancipate sex feeling from the control of moral and spiritual law (instead of making it the chief aim to place the spirit in a position of mastery over the sex nature), are essentially hostile, not only to our whole social evolution and to the development of individual character, but to actual physical health in the sphere of sex.”

If it could be definitely shown that sexual continence may in some cases be detrimental to physical health, it would still not be sufficient ground for removing the restraints of morality in such cases; for, as Northcote says:* “The question as to the necessity for sexual intercourse in a given case has a wider bearing than in relation to bodily health. The conflict must be fought out in each man’s soul around the great comprehensive and in itself perfectly legitimate question: How far is the gratification of the sexual longing a necessity of my whole life, of my spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical development?”

Considered in its wider bearings the question can have but one answer. The highest interests of the whole life of the individual can be conserved only as he maintains the control of his spiritual faculties over sexual impulses, and leads a life of continence outside of marriage. Any other course leads to confusion of mind, weakness and vacillation of will, vulgarizing of the finer feelings, and

*“Christianity and Sex Problems.” Hugh Northcote, M.A. F. A. Davis Co., Philadelphia.

deadening of spiritual perception. No matter by what jugglery of logic the individual may attempt to justify to himself any indulgence of sexual desire outside of marriage, there is that within him the consent of which he cannot gain. He cannot indulge in sexual practices and keep his own self-respect; he cannot have a sense of right relation to his fellow-men in adopting a moral standard which he instinctively denies to womanhood and yet which demands the degradation of woman to immoral purposes; and if given to sexual practices—outside of marriage—he cannot have any real correspondence with that spiritual universe of which every man feels himself more or less clearly to be a part.

The tradition that the exercise of the sex function is necessary to the preservation of virility is not only without foundation, but to the intelligent physician is ridiculous. The essential male sex organs, the testes, are glands. We know that no other glands in the body lose their function from lack of exercise. A man may not weep for half a century and yet should the occasion arise to cause him to weep he would find himself capable of shedding tears as readily as anyone else. His tear glands would not have lost their function from lack of exercise. A woman may bear and nurse a child in her teens and not have another for twenty or twenty-five years and yet be able to nurse the second as readily as the first. Her milk glands will not have lost their function. A stallion may not have opportunity to exercise his sex function for many years from birth up without decline of his procreative power. The same is true of man. The function of the testes is not impaired for want of voluntary exercise. On the other hand, their function is often seriously impaired by premature or excessive exercise.

Though the sex function may never be voluntarily exercised, the sex organs do not remain wholly inactive. The testes have a double function to perform: one, the elaboration of the so-called "spermine" or internal secretion which is poured into the blood and upon which are dependent the development and maintenance of the physical and mental male characteristics embraced in the term "virility." The other is the production of "spermatozoa" or sperm cells, which are the vital constituents of the semen. The secretion of spermine *is going on all the time*, independent of the voluntary exercise of the sex function. The spermatozoa are liberated under sexual excitement only. But in practically all normal men there occurs from time to time, at least, momentary sexual stimulation in which spermatozoa are to some extent liberated. Furthermore, it is characteristic of a pair of the accessory sexual glands, the seminal vesicles, to secrete their product all the time and become periodically filled and distended with their contents. This period of distension is likely to be also the period of most intense sexual desire. Nature provides relief by emptying the vesicles, usually while the person is asleep. We therefore call the phenomenon a nocturnal emission or "wet dream." Preceding the emission there occurs as a rule a period of involuntary sexual excitement associated with an erotic dream, in which the testes become more or less active and to some extent liberate spermatozoa. There is no evidence of decline of procreative power in the absence of voluntary exercise of the sexual function. But so far as functional activity of the sex glands may have any bearing on the preservation of their integrity, nature has carefully provided for such activity independent of the voluntary act.

In seeking to correct the erroneous beliefs about the sex function prevalent in the minds of young men, the writer undertook to bring together the testimony of the foremost medical authorities of the United States on the question. He drew up a statement regarding sexual continence, and submitted it to leading physiologists for criticism so as to bring its phraseology wholly within the requirements of scientific precision. It was then submitted for endorsement to leading medical authorities and foremost physicians throughout the country. The aim was to secure the expression of the most representative physicians of the United States on this subject. The ready and hearty response of 370 of these men in endorsing the declaration leaves no doubt as to the conviction of the leading men of the medical profession on this question. The declaration is as follows:

In view of the individual and social dangers which spring from the widespread belief that continence may be detrimental to health, and of the fact that municipal toleration of prostitution is sometimes defended on the ground that sexual indulgence is necessary, we, the undersigned, members of the medical profession, testify to our belief that continence has not been shown to be detrimental to health or virility; that there is no evidence of its being inconsistent with the highest physical, mental and moral efficiency; and that it offers the only sure reliance for sexual health outside of marriage.

We give here the names and titles of the first twelve physicians who signed the declaration. The entire list is found beginning on page 25.

Abraham Jacobi, M.D.

President, American Medical Association.

Professor Diseases of Children, Emeritus, College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City.

William M. Polk, M.D.

President, New York Academy of Medicine.

Dean of Cornell University Medical College.

Visiting Surgeon, Bellevue Hospital, New York City.

Walter B. Cannon, M.D.

Professor Physiology in Harvard University.

Henry A. Christian, M.D.

Professor of Medicine in Harvard University, and Physician-in-Chief to the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston.

Theodore C. Janeway, M.D.

Professor of Medicine in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York City.

Visiting Physician at the Presbyterian Hospital, and member of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

William S. Thayer, M.D.

Professor of Clinical Medicine in Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Homer F. Swift, M.D.

Resident Physician of the Hospital of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York City.

J. W. T. Finney, M.D.

Professor Clinical Surgery, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

John J. Abel, M.D.

Professor of Pharmacology in the Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore.

W. H. Howell.

Professor of Physiology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Howard A. Kelly, M.D.

Professor Gynecological Surgery, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

John Howland, M.D.

Professor of Pædiatrics, Dept. of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Another false teaching largely circulated among young men is that the sexual impulse in men is so imperious that it cannot be controlled, and that, therefore, a life of chastity for the average young man is impossible. Dr. Prince A. Morrow says:* "The experience of specialists shows that it is not the strongly sexed and most virile men who are most given to licentiousness, but those whose sexual organs have been rendered weak and irritable by unnatural exercise, in whom the habit of sensual indulgence has been set up, and in whom self-control has not been developed by exercise, or the will power weakened. These sexual weaklings yield to sensual impulses which the normally strong feel but repress."

It is not the man who resolutely lives the continent life who finds the task most difficult, but it is the man who has aroused his sex nature by abnormal sexual experiences and the man who habitually allows his imagination

*"Health and the Hygiene of Sex." Prince A. Morrow, M.D. Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis, New York.

to play upon sexually stimulating images. The man who lives the continent life, who schools himself not to allow his imagination to dwell upon sexual images, who meets every sexual temptation on the instant by diverting his thoughts to pure and worthy subjects—the man who keeps his sex life related in his thoughts to high ideals, noble sentiments and deep responsibilities—reduces his sex problem to the minimum and wins thereby an intellectual and moral liberty, a power of concentration upon great tasks, which is unknown to the man who seeks to solve his sex problem by occasional sexual indulgence. The latter finds that the play of his imagination stimulated by his experiences keeps sex thoughts and sex impulses so much in the foreground as to keep him in a state of intellectual and moral confusion. He sooner or later becomes a weak-willed slave. In a recent letter from a junior in a university was this pitiful confession: “I have about become reconciled to never being more than a 60 per cent man.” Here was a student conscious of ability to be a 100 per cent man, in his better moments naturally a man of high ideals and ambitions, but seemingly robbed of the possibility of realizing them by the demoralization introduced into his life by the habit of seeking to solve his sex problem by occasional secret indulgence. In this as in every other realm true liberty can be found not in license, but in willing obedience to law.

The fact that the sexual impulse like any other natural impulse can be controlled is best proven by the fact that many men do control it. The asceticism of the Middle Ages has abundantly demonstrated the possibility of subjecting the animal instincts to the control of the higher faculties. The Catholic clergy today are demon-

strating the same possibility; not only the possibility of young men leading continent lives until age or circumstances shall render marriage feasible, but the possibility of abstaining from indulging the sexual impulse throughout life. However, we need not go to unusual conditions of life for proof. In every walk of life, everywhere there is a considerable proportion of men, strong robust, virile fellows, who do control the sex impulse, lead absolutely chaste lives, and do not find the task an unbearable burden.

The fallacy of the argument of the imperiousness of the sexual impulse is again shown by our attitude toward woman. Womanhood outside of marriage does not demand any concessions from society regarding the sex life. Woman expects to control her sex impulses and does control them and every self-respecting man expects and demands that she do so. It is true that in the majority of women the sex impulse is comparatively quiescent. But there is a considerable proportion of women in whom it is as strong as it is in most men; yet we make no allowance for these. We demand that ALL women, outside of marriage, shall lead sexually continent lives.

One more consideration. No man who believes in a divine order in the universe can believe that an all-wise Creator has endowed man with a function which in his interest must be exercised to the degradation of womanhood and the destruction of the social order.

The double standard of morality so largely acquiesced in by society today—a standard which demands absolute chastity of woman but grants liberty from restraint to man—is a relic of barbarism. It marks one of the most backward steps in social evolution. But there are many

healthy signs of the awakening of a new public conscience on this question and the day is probably not very far distant when the standard of morality binding upon woman will be held equally binding upon man. This will be brought about largely by the women themselves. With the new movement for the frank discussion of sex problems and for including the subject of sex in the educational program of the home and the school, women are rapidly becoming better informed about the injustice of the double standard and its terrible consequences to the family and to society generally. And with the growing movement for the independence of woman, she will come to expect and demand that when she meets her beloved at the marriage altar, mutually to pledge eternal fidelity, he will bring to her the same purity of body and soul that she brings to him and which he expects and demands of her, and she will become increasingly careful to be sure of the facts beforehand.

To allow the demand for the establishing of a single standard of morality to proceed wholly or chiefly from the women would be a serious reflection upon the manhood of America. The traditional attitude of society toward the double standard should be a challenge to every self-respecting man, by personal example and by his influence, to hit that standard square between the eyes. This challenge comes with special force to the college man, for society has a right to look to him to be a leader in the world's life, to set aside that which is outworn, inadequate or low and set up that which the best intelligence and conscience of the time demand.

In the human species the normal sexual act, aside from its procreative function, is a love act, associated with the noblest sentiments, the finest feelings, and the highest

qualities which belong to human love. Considered in its relation to the whole life of the individual, physical, psychic, spiritual, and social, as it must be, the act becomes abnormal and degrading in just so far as it is dissociated from true marital love and becomes an act of mere sense gratification. Any indulgence of the sexual impulse, outside of wedlock, must always be debasing to manhood, and it involves social responsibilities which no man has a right to assume. Much of sexual indulgence in wedlock today, too, is abnormal and degrading, since it is wholly on the physical plane. The results are largely shown in the records of our divorce courts. Sexuality divorced from real love can never be a lasting or satisfying marital bond.

Let it not be supposed by anyone that the requirements of a sexually continent life fall upon the unmarried man alone. In every normal marriage relation there are periods ranging from a week to many months and in some cases even years, when the husband must abstain from sexual intercourse if he would be a man and conserve the welfare of his wife and offspring. Not only must the married man abstain from sexual indulgence during varying periods of time, but at all times the sex life must be governed by reason and consideration. In the majority of cases it requires the exercise of no little will and restraint to keep indulgence within due limits of moderation, especially during the early years of married life. The man who before marriage has constantly trained himself in self-restraint will not find the task of playing the part of a manly man in marriage too difficult. On the other hand, few who have not learned self-control before marriage do so after marriage. It is known that of the men who visit houses of prostitution

fully half are married men. Although they come from all walks of life, they come chiefly from the ranks of those who were accustomed to indulge their sex nature before marriage. With many of these men adultery is not a matter of deliberate and conscienceless choice. They are driven to it against their better judgment, their higher ideals, and their deeper selves, because in them the habit of seeking unnatural sex experience has become ingrained in their very nervous structure and the faculties for self-restraint have not been developed by consistent exercise. They become weak-willed slaves, and for most men leading such a double life, conscience makes of it a living hell.

The fight for chastity is not an easy one, but its rewards are surpassingly great. Chastity, if it is real, in thinking as well as in act, makes for robust physical health and abounding vitality, for intellectual and moral liberty, for a deep, bracing self-respect, and for a sense of self-mastery which is the crowning glory of the manly man. Even greater is the young man's reward in the consciousness of bringing to the marriage altar a body and soul as pure as that of his bride, of being able to pass on to his children an inheritance free from taint of disease or weakening tendencies, and of having done his part to keep the germ-plasm—his representative to all future generations of the human race—on the up-grade.

In the fight for character as it touches the sex-life there is no aristocracy. Every normal man has his fight. It is only a question whether he is playing the coward and compromising with the enemy, or through a consistent fight acquiring ruggedness and resistance in every fibre of his being and that sense of self-mastery which gives spring to the step, fire to the eye, grip to the will,

and the joy of real life to the soul. It is a question of sexual love sensualized or spiritualized.

This supreme fight is a fight of the whole man—body, mind, and spirit. Intellect and spirit are limited by physical states. The physical passions clamor most loudly for gratification in the physically weak. It is when energies are low and nerves jaded that the lower man most easily springs into control. Flabby muscles go with a weak will and a bad stomach cuts the nerve of spiritual aspiration. A weak, abused, ill-kept body is a tremendous handicap in leading a clean life. An immense amount of immorality has its roots in sheer laziness. The athlete to succeed must train consistently and hard and gain power by self-denial and struggle against resistance. No less must the man who would excel in manhood train his body to be the efficient and obedient servant of the soul. Infinitely greater is the incentive and the stake. *The body at its best* is the first essential in the fight for character.

The real battle-ground of temptation lies in the mind. The average environment is full of the sexually suggestive. No man can escape it. But he can rob it of power. To influence him it must gain his attention and the consent of his will. He can refuse it both. But he must do it positively, not negatively; not by saying "I will not think of this," but by keeping his thoughts so fixed upon the wholesome, pure, and bracing that the debasing can make no appeal. The man has slim chance against the fascinations of impurity who does not fill his life with great enthusiasms and compelling interests beside which the appeal of the lustful must be as the appeal of cheap and gaudy tinsel. The life of great rich content is the life best fortified against the

unworthy sexual appeal. Such a life content must be achieved by persistent living in conscious presence of and feeding upon that which lifts, braces, and inspires. Great books, great pictures, great music, great personalities—such things, culminating in great meditation and great service, are the making of the impregnable life.

The most demoralizing, paralyzing, enslaving habit in the life of a man is that of an unrestrained and lustful imagination. Psychology shows us that the man who allows his mind to dwell upon the sexually suggestive starts a process vividly portrayed in the words of Saint Augustine: "A look, a picture, a fascination, a fall." Many a man starts with "a little harmless romancing," he thinks. He does not intend to give way to an unmanly act. But the picture fascinates him and he plays with it a bit. He forgets the close connection between psychologic processes and the physiologic functions of the sex organs. He finds that having opened the sluice-gate a crack he has not the strength to close it again and the flood overwhelms him. At the beginning a little "harmless romancing," at the end his birthright sold for a mess of pottage. Many men who because of fear or other restraints never give way to an outward sexual act are yet absolute profligates in their thinking, sapping the best energies and destroying the finer sensibilities of their manhood. No man need anticipate a hell more terrible than that which conscience makes for the man conscious of capacities for a great achieving life but robbed of that capacity by a mental habit that deprives him of the power of application and resistance and brings confusion into every aspect of his life. No man can afford to lend his imagination for an instant to trifling with sexual temptation.

What is the alternative? Is it to repress the imagination? Far from it; it is the most productive gift of man. But he must control it and direct it into high and useful channels. Instead of letting it drift about on a trackless and dangerous sea, let him harness and compel it into channels of great and worthy interests, linked up to his best powers for a life of useful achievement. How immeasurably enriched the world would be in achievement and character if the rampant imagination of men were directed into productive channels. *To fill the life with great compelling interests and to train the mind to positive and productive thinking on a higher plane* is the second essential in the fight for character in relation to the sex life.

To all the above every sane and self-respecting man will assent. It is sense; it is science. But the man with unaided will is heard to cry out with Paul: "To will is present with me but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice." Listen to this iron-willed fighter of old! "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" A cry of despair and defeat, do you say? Listen to his answer. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That was Paul's solution and victory, and it has been the deepest and completest solution of man's fight for character in all the ages and is today. The man who would achieve mastery over self must lay hold of the most powerful motives. The most pervasive, most compelling, most conquering motive is that which actuates the sincerely and deeply religious life. No other motive so grips and steadies "the psychological center whence all the virtues radiate." "The expulsive power of a new affection"—as

Chalmers has put it—drives the base impulse from the control of life and seats upon its throne a victorious Lord. Open your life to the infinite God and take him as “The great Companion” to compel your affection, and as Lord and Master to inspire obedience and He will bring to the feeble will a new dynamic unknown before and all-sufficient. All life will then be interpreted in new terms and seen in true perspective. The sex life will become rightly related to character, to responsibility, and to God’s eternal purpose. On the basis of scientific procedure the deepest and completest solution of a man’s sex problem lies in vital, personal relationship to the infinite and eternal God.

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